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E.O. 12958: DECL: 07/09/2019
TAGS: [ASEC](#) [PGOV](#) [PTER](#) [BA](#)
SUBJECT: BAHRAIN: ALLEGED TERRORISTS' TRIAL WILL CONTINUE
ON SEPTEMBER 9

Classified By: Ambassador Adam Ereli for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (SBU) Two Bahraini men arrested on April 26 for possession of weapons and intending to use them to attack U.S. forces made their initial court appearance on July 1. During this preliminary hearing, the High Criminal Court ruled that the prosecution had enough evidence to go to trial, and refused defense motions to release the two on bail and to permit weekly family visits. The defense will plead its case on September 9.

¶2. (U) Local papers reported that the men allegedly were in contact with members of a terrorist cell (local code for Al Qaeda) in Iran and intended to attack U.S. Navy forces. The papers showed pictures of all the weapons seized, which included two Kalashnikov-style assault rifles, a pistol, one magazine for each firearm, approximately 75 pistol rounds, approximately 425 rifle rounds, a hunting knife, a decorative dagger, and a tasseled sword, along with a rifle carrying case, two pistol holsters, and sheathes for the edged weapons.

¶3. (S) Comment: The U.S. and Bahrain continue to move in lockstep on counterterrorism. Bahraini security forces acted quickly against the two defendants based on information provided by the USG. This is the third instance in two years in which the GOB has arrested and tried Sunni extremists. Sensationalist local press reporting aside, the case represents continued successful counterterrorism cooperation between the U.S. and the GOB.

¶4. (SBU) Comment continued: Criminal cases move slowly here; procedural delays are common, and the court system virtually shuts down during the Gulf summer when many officials go on a month-long holiday. The defendants remain in jail and, according to the July 1 ruling, will stay there for the duration of the trial.

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